Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Migrants help boost Australia's skills

Migrants have boosted Australia's workforce skills, with two-thirds of all working age migrants possessing academic or trade qualifications in 2010–11, according to a report released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

This is higher than the rate for people born in Australia (66% for migrants, 56% for Australian born).

The proportion of working age migrants who were at least 15 years old when they arrived in Australia and who had already completed a degree has tripled, rising from 15% in the early 1990s to 44% in the last five years.

Overall, 59% of people aged 15–64 years in Australia had a qualification compared with 51% in 2001.

The unemployment rate in 2010-11 for people without a qualification was around double the rate for those with a qualification (7.3% compared with 3.4%).

When asked about the main impact of their highest qualification on their working life, about one-quarter (26%) said it assisted them in joining the workforce for the first time and 9% said it assisted them in getting a promotion or pay rise; however, 18% said their highest qualification had no impact.

Of the 11.2 million employed people, around half (51%) were working in a field that was relevant to their highest qualification, while 14% believed their qualification was not relevant and about a third (35%) had no qualification.

Of the 14% of employed people (1.6 million) who reported that their highest qualification was not relevant to their current job, 29% stated this was because they were no longer interested in the field of their highest qualification.

More details are in *Learning and Work, Australia, 2010–11* (cat. no. 4235.0).

Media Notes:

- Non-school qualifications (referred to as qualifications) are awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education. They include qualifications at the Postgraduate Degree level, Master Degree level, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate level, Bachelor Degree level, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level, and Certificates I, II, III and IV levels.
- The term 'relevant' refers to where people stated they currently work in the same field as their highest qualification, or if not working in the same field, stated their highest qualification was still highly relevant or relevant to their current job.

- Data from 2001 comes from *Survey of Education and Training, 2001* (cat. no. 6278.0).
- When reporting ABS data the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.

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